



PLACER COUNTY
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PRESS RELEASE

Date/Time of Release: Thursday, January 31, 2002
Date/Time of Occurrence: January 28 through January 31, 2002
Nature of Call: Sheriff's Department sees increase in snow rescues
Location of Call: Placer County/High Sierra

Released by: Capt. Rick Armstrong, (530) 889-7816

SHERIFF EDWARD N. BONNER RELEASES THE FOLLOWING:

The Placer County Sheriff's Department rescued numerous skiers, snowboarders and off-roaders this week, enduring frigid temperatures and low-snow levels.

Late Monday night, deputies initiated a search for missing Foresthill resident Garret Crawl, who told friends he was going off-roading in the snow. At first light Tuesday morning, the sheriff's helicopter, Eagle One, flew to the area and spotted the 20-year-old Crawl sitting inside his Toyota pickup truck on Mountain Chief Road. Crawl, who stuck his head out of the truck when he heard the rescue crew hovering above, was rescued a short time later by ground crews. Deputies said he was suffering from hypothermia, but was otherwise uninjured.

With temperatures at well below zero Tuesday, Tahoe deputies, with the assistance of the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team, were called to the Alpine Meadows ski resort to find a skier and snowboarder who had ventured out-of bounds early in the day. When the pair didn't return by 4:30 p.m., a friend contacted deputies. Nordic team members located the two men several miles down a Five Lakes drainage, near Bear Pen Creek, which the snowboarder had fallen into several times, deputies reported.

The skier was evacuated by Care Flight, but the snowboarder was too weak from hypothermia to make it to the helicopter-landing zone. Rescuers kept him warm all night, despite the fact that the temperature fell to 20-degrees below zero. He was evacuated by the California Highway Patrol helicopter early Wednesday morning. According to Sgt. Bill Langton, the man was treated for hypothermia at Tahoe Forest Hospital and subsequently released.

Since October 1, the Sheriff's Department has initiated 20 snow search and rescue operations. Skiers and snowboarders are reminded to stay within resort boundaries and are encouraged to carry a cellular telephone. Motorists in the high country should always travel with spare water, food, blankets and tire chains.